

April 17, 2015

California Department of Water Resources

Re: 2014 Water Energy Grant Draft Funding Recommendations

To Whomever it May Concern:

We are writing to provide comment on the proposed California Department of Water Resources' (DWR) Water-Energy Grant Program Draft Funding Recommendations. WaterSmart Software, a software-as-a-service provider that offers water utilities monitoring, engagement and compliance services, serves over two dozen utilities in California. WaterSmart urges the DWR to reconsider its position that behavioral water efficiency is outside the scope of the eligible projects for the Water Energy Grant Funding. In particular, the UC Davis Center for Water-Energy Efficiency's (CWEE) proposal, Smart Water Energy Savings (SWES), was deemed ineligible in the Technical Review Summary stating that the "actual water and energy saving activity is outside the scope of the grant" (DWR 2015). WaterSmart has seen first hand the huge potential for behavioral water efficiency and knows it is a proven, measurable technology that can add cost-effective savings to the Water Energy Grant and other programs.

### **Background on WaterSmart Software**

WaterSmart currently works with thirty eight water utilities across four states, including over thirty utilities in California, to engage residential customers on their water use, driving conservation and customer engagement. On behalf of partner utilities, WaterSmart sends customized Home Water Reports to residential water users, hosts an interactive web and mobile application accessible Customer Portal where residents can learn more about their water use and ways to save. Utility staff access a Dashboard to track program outcomes and gain insights on customers and their water use, including their performance on meeting their state-mandated reduction goals. WaterSmart has also created a unique "drought compliance" tool that enables each utility to implement each requirement that the Board has requested including, for example, customer leak notification and monthly GPCD calculations.

WaterSmart solutions are proven to improve water-use efficiency by up to 5% within the first 6-12 months. A third party evaluation of WaterSmart's work with East Bay Municipal Utility District is available on the website of the California Water Foundation (which funded the third party audit) [here](#). The evaluation found that the cost per acre-foot conserved ranged from \$250-590, which compares very favorably with many other municipal conservation programs and alternative

supply projects. The evaluation also found increased participation and engagement in other utility programs.

### **Comments on Draft Recommendations**

The projects DWR has recommended for funding in the draft recommendations largely include traditional installation of water efficient appliances. While these programs are important, they may not always offer the most cost-effective water conservation savings available in a given region. Behavioral efficiency, though a relatively new concept, is proven and should be embraced by DWR. As Peter Brostrom, DWR Water-Use Efficiency Section Chief said in a recent Washington Post article about behavioral efficiency: "we think that's the biggest way that we will achieve the savings that we need during the drought."

We urge DWR to re-examine its draft recommendations, and re-evaluate the eligibility of the UC Davis Center for Water-Energy Efficiency's (CWEE) proposal, Smart Water Energy Savings. We believe that upon a closer look, DWR will find this proposal offers cost-effective, measurable water and energy conservation that greatly benefits disadvantaged communities in California and that, while innovative, it falls well within the scope of the Water-Energy Grant.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter Yolles".

Peter Yolles  
Founder  
WaterSmart Software